

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 15, 22, and 34 - 37 are amended. New claims 41- 42 are presented. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 11, 15, 20, 22, 27, and 34 - 42 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Statement On Substance Of Interview

An in-person interview was conducted between the Applicants' representative and the Examiner on September 21, 2007. During the interview, features that patentably distinguish the present invention over the art currently relied on were discussed.

In addition, during the in-person interview, the Examiner asserted:

[A]dding a limitation to the processor identifying/selecting the expert, which does appear to have promise for overcoming the last rejection. The examiner noted that the specialized button (230 in Fig. 2 is another potential useful limitation. The examiner noted that the potentially allowable matter suggested in the Office section mailed on 23 March 2007 also appeared to have merit.

(See, Continuation Sheet attached to Interview Summary).

Applicants thank the Examiner for the opportunity to conduct the in-person interview.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 is amended herein to recite a computer system including "processing means for identifying the expert to receive the request from the said one member based on information regarding the one said member." Support for the amendment is found, for example, on pages 18-19 of the specification.

Claim 15 is amended herein to recite a computer-readable storage storing a program for controlling a computer to provide information, by: "transmitting a web page providing first display information to a terminal of one registered member, said first display information comprising: a first image to identify said one member himself or herself, and a plurality of second images in a tree-like arrangement to identify other registered members." (Amendatory language being underlined). Support for the amendment is found, for example, in FIG. 1 and on pages 4-5 of the specification.

Claim 22 is amended herein to recite a method including "requesting a comment from the expert by said one member by clicking an expert request button displayed on a page of the one said member." Support for the amendment is found, for example, in FIG. 2 and on pages 7-8 of

the specification.

Claim 34-37 are amended herein to correct formalities. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Item 3: Rejection of claim 36 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

In item 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 36 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite and asserts the phrase "the inputted comment" lacks antecedent basis. (Action at page 2, lines 12-14).

Claim 36 is amended herein to replace the phrase "the inputted comment" with the phrase --an inputted comment--.

Applicants submit that claim 36 complies with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph and request the rejection be withdrawn.

Items 5-7: Rejection of claims 1, 11, 15, 20, 22, 27 and 34-40 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Namikata et al. (U.S.P. 5,949,414)

In items 5-7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects independent claims 1, 15, and 22 (and respective dependent claims) under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Namikata et al. (U.S.P. 5,949,414). The rejections are traversed.

In item 8 of the Office Action, the Action concedes that Namikata does not teach forming second display information promoting said one member to request a comment from an expert in said group, who is different from the other registered members, as recited by independent claims 1, 15, and 22. However, the Examiner asserts that:

Sending an email message asking for advice from a someone outside of the meeting membership, but within the group, such as a colleague back at the home office, reads on forming second display information prompting said one member to request a comment from an expert in said group, who is different from the other registered members. Because email is commonly used to request advice from colleagues, it would have been obvious . . . to add to the teachings of Namikata et al. that the meeting member send an email message asking for advice from a someone outside of the meeting membership, but within the group, such as a colleague back at the home office.

(Action at page 3, line 21 - page 4, line 3).

I. Independent claim 1, as amended herein, recites a computer system including "... means for transmitting, to said terminal of said one member, a web page providing first display information to a terminal of one registered member . . . , and means for forming second display information prompting said one member to request a comment from an expert in said group, who is different from the other registered members; and processing means for identifying the expert

to receive the request from the said one member based on information regarding the one said member (emphasis added)."

As discussed during the in-person interview, Applicants submit that Namikata does not teach or suggest "processing means" for identifying an expert. By contrast, Namikata teaches:

When a user wants to start side conversation, the user selects a member icon as a side-conversation-destination user from the conference member panel 3-6.

(column 5, lines 35-40).

In item 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts:

"Expert" is interpreted as anyone from whom knowledgeable advice is sought.
"Display information" is interpreted as any information presented in a display screen. Sending an email message reads on forming second display information.

(Action at page 4, lines 16-22).

That is, the Namikata teaches that a user selects a member who is *arguendo* an expert.

Since features recited by independent claim 1 (and dependent claims 11 and 38) are not taught by Namikata, the rejection should be withdrawn and claims 1, 11, and 38 allowed.

II. Independent claim 15 recites a computer-readable storage storing a program for controlling a computer to provide information, by "transmitting a web page providing first display information to a terminal of one registered member, said first display information comprising: a first image to identify said one member himself or herself, and a plurality of second images in a tree-like arrangement to identify other registered members, wherein each of the other registered members belongs to a same group as said one member. . . "

As discussed during the in-person interview, in item 9 of the Office Action mailed March 23, 2007 ("previous Office Action), entitled Possibility of Allowable Subject Matter, the Examiner asserts:

Namikata et al. does not teach or suggest that the images are arranged in a tree format, which is supported by Fig. 1 of the application. Hence the instant rejection could be overcome by appropriate addition of this limitation , e.g., . . . "a plurality of second images in a tree-like arrangement to identify other registered members, wherein"

(Previous Office Action at page 4, lines 8-14).

By contrast, Namikata teaches:

When a user wants to start side conversation, the user selects a member icon as a side-conversation-destination user from the conference member panel 3-6, then drags the member icon 3-8 to a side conversation member

panel 3-7 and drops the member icon. Then, the user clicks a side conversation start button 3-10. Side conversation is started upon agreement of the destination user. . . . If the destination user does not agree to start/end side conversation, a message shown in FIG. 4A is displayed in a message panel 3-21.

(column 5, lines 35-46).

Since features recited by independent claim 15 (and dependent claims 20 and 39) are not taught by Namikata the rejection should be withdrawn and claims 15, 20, and 39 allowed.

III. Independent claim 22, as amended herein, recites an information providing method including "transmitting a web page providing first display information to a terminal of one registered member . . . , forming second display information prompting said one member to request a comment from an expert in said group, who is different from the other registered members; and requesting a comment from the expert by said one member by clicking an expert request button displayed on a page of the one said member (emphasis underlined)."

As discussed during the in-person interview, Applicants submit that Namikata does not teach or suggest requesting a comment from the expert by said one member by clicking an "expert request button." By contrast, Namikata teaches:

When a user wants to start side conversation, the user selects a member icon as a side-conversation-destination user from the conference member panel 3-6

(column 5, lines 35-40).

In item 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts:

"Expert" is interpreted as anyone from whom knowledgeable advice is sought.
"Display information" is interpreted as any information presented in a display screen. Sending an email message reads on forming second display information.

(Action at page 4, lines 16-22).

That is, the Namikata teaches that a user selects a member who is *arguendo* an expert from a side icon.

Since features recited by independent claim 22 (and dependent claims 27 and 34-37) are not taught by Namikata the rejection should be withdrawn and claims 22, 27, and 34-37 allowed.

Summary

Applicants submit that the traversal herein meets the requirements as set forth by the USPTO Examination Guidelines for Determining Obviousness Under 35 U.S.C. §103 in View of the KSR of October 3, 2007 Section V. Consideration of Applicant's Rebuttal Evidence set forth

in the USPTO Guidelines, that elements recited in each of the independent claims in combination do not merely perform the function that each element performs separately, and that further, the results of the claimed combination were unexpected.

Applicants submit that if the case is not allowed that a final first Office Action would not be appropriate as the Examiner indicated in the in-person interview that further search would be required as the features in the current amendments are not taught by the art currently relied on.

Since features recited by independent claims 1, 15, and 22 (and respective dependent claims) are not taught by Namikata, the rejection should be withdrawn and claims 1, 11, 15, 20, 22, 27 and 34-40 allowed.

New Claims 41-42

New claims 41-42 are presented to recite features in a different fashion.

New dependent claim 41 recites the computer system according to claim 1, wherein the processing means for identifying the expert is an analyzer.

New dependent claim 42 recites the computer-readable storage storing a program for controlling a computer to provide information according to claim 15, wherein links to respective web sites of the other registered members are embedded in each of the plurality of second images in the tree-like arrangement.

No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry of the amended and new claims are respectfully requested. These, and other, features of claims 41-42 are patentably distinguishable from the cited art, and they are submitted to be allowable for the recitations therein.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited and possibly concluded by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney to discuss any such remaining issues.

Serial No. 09/747,965

If there are any underpayments or overpayments of fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge and/or credit the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: November 26, 2007

By: Paul W. Bobowiec
Paul W. Bobowiec
Registration No. 47,431

1201 New York Ave, N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501